CHAIN MAIL

CHALLENGE FOR FILM-MAKERS

Design and make a product to:

- look like real chain mail, especially in close-up shots
- move like real chain mail
- be much lighter than real chain mail (so that actors can wear it for long periods)
- be easily and cheaply mass-produced for thousands of costumes
- make little noise (so as not to affect the film sound).

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Mask Making
Props x 3
Surfaces and Substances
Wear and Tear

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

BEFORE

- Find out about chain mail:
  - What is it?
  - Who wore it?
  - Where and when was it worn?
  - What was it made of (materials)?
  - How was it made (process)?
- What might be some problems with making chain mail for people to wear in films?

TEACHING POINTS

Chain mail is armour made of linked metal rings (usually steel). It is thought that the Celts first developed it as far back as the fifth century BC and that only the wealthy or powerful wore it. It was later used by other cultures (e.g. the Romans and the Germans).

e.g. weight, noise, cost of production, time it takes to make

DURING

See the chain mail in:

- the corselet (zone 14)
- Gimli's display (zone 16)
- Boromir's display (zone 19).

Touch the pieces of chain mail in zone 14.

Focus questions:

- Which characters in the movie wear chain mail, and why?
- What differences can you find in the styles of the chain mail?

The chain mail in the movie was made by:

- slicing rings of narrow PVC piping and cutting every second ring
- linking together cut and uncut rings to form large sheets
- sealing the cuts with a hot knife
- metal-plating the sheets.

- Design and make a product that meets all or some of the criteria in Challenge for Film-makers, using materials provided by the teacher or found in the classroom or at home.
- Present and assess your work.

Possible materials: card, paper, tinfoil, pieces of firm plastic, yarn, string, paint, bathroom chain, tear tabs from cans.

Possible processes:

- Knit or crochet metallic yarn (or spray-painted plain yarn or string).
- Cut and link tear tabs from cans.